

Democracy: *Democracy arises from men's thinking that if they are equal in any respect, they are equal in all respects.*
—Aristotle, Greek philosopher, 384-322 B.C.



*By Col.
Carl A. Strock
POD Commander*

Commander's Comment

Customer service serves us, too

It is hard to believe that three months have passed since I took command of the Division from Col. Robin Cababa. I have learned much in that short time as I concentrated on understanding who we are and who our customers are. To do both, I felt it important to visit each district, each field office and a representative number of projects. I have been universally impressed with everyone I met and everything I saw. We clearly enjoy a dedicated and competent workforce, exciting projects, and demanding but appreciative customers.

I came to realize that our customers fall in three broad categories: end users, taxpayers, and responsible officials. Our responsibilities to each category are inter-related but each has a different set of requirements that are addressed in different ways.

First and last, we must never lose sight of our most important customer, the end user: from the Alaskan fisherman who now has a safe harbor at Kodiak; to the airman processing passengers in the terminal at Hickam AFB; to soldiers in Korea who are moving from Quonset huts to modern barracks; to families who live, learn, shop, play, heal, and worship in our facilities. I assure you that they know and appreciate all you are doing to enhance the quality of their working and leisure environment.

Taxpayers provide the resources to do our work and give us direction through their elected representatives. We owe it to them to be stewards of both the environment and the national resources entrusted to our care. We do this through striking the balance between responsible growth and preservation of the environment for future generations. I am convinced that we are a respected institution in the eyes of the American people.

Responsible officials include local authorities in civil works projects, but our supported commanders are perhaps our most demanding and visible customers. They must make tough decisions on how to allocate their severely limited funds to keep their units trained and ready while also tending to quality of life issues. The success of almost everything they do relies on the quality of their facilities and infrastructure.

The needs in this area are growing due to advances in technology and the continuing aging of our installations. With requirements expanding and funds shrinking we cannot continue to do business as usual and still provide the quality support our customers demand and deserve. Change is an imperative, particularly in our region of the world where customers have other choices. Recognition of the imperative to change forms the basis for our Corps Vision and our strategy for change.

The three pillars of our strategy are to Revolutionize Effectiveness, Seek Growth Opportunities, and Invest in People. I charge each of you to rededicate yourselves to these pillars with the realization that our ultimate objective is to satisfy, no, delight the customer. In that way you will contribute to the recognition that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is, in the words of our Vision, "—a vital part of the Army, the Engineer team of choice, and a values-based organization - Respected, Responsive, and Reliable."

And keep in mind, too, something that Sam Walton, the founder of Walmart said, "There is only one boss: the customer. And he can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else."

We want our customers to choose to stay with us.

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